it is divine. How very lofty and holy, how serene and joyful is the condition of *Bkakta's* soul, when fully entranced, he sees God in himself and himself in God.

Again, the *Bhakta's* cry for union is inspired by the fire of love. The fire can be quenched only by union with God, the Beloved. This love is sweet madness. It- exalts the earthly body to heaven ; it makes the very hills dance with joy; its *1'Q.ys* mount up to the firmament; its purifying
virtues render the soul a burnished mirror to reflect Him. The soul is perceptible only as it bears that reflection.

But how is this progress of the soul towards or unto the
Lord to be attained ? Sankara says through five processes or rather stages and illustrates them as follows :

As the full-grown native seed of the ankola tree clings,
as it falls down, back to the parent stalk; as tJie needle feels
drawn to the magnet; as the chaste true wife is embraced to
the beloved of the heart; as the creeper twines itself around the
sustaining stem; and as the ever-eager current flows ceaselessly
towards the sea singing the one song 'I am for the sea,' so the
soul seeks repose in God and finds its fullest existence in the
contemplation of and devotion to Him.

I reproduce below Brahma Rishi Venkata Ratnam's illuminating exposition of these stages in the soul's ascent to God.

'(The *ankolam* ia said to be a tree with this peculiarity, that
immediately its seed falls to the ground, it clings to the base of its trunk
almost instinctively. The needle-magnet principle is a familiar pheno-
menon. You remember Carlyle's application of this comparison to
the irresistible attraction between Boswell and Johnson. Place any
amount of rubbish in between; and yet each will be drawn to the
other. The mariner's compass always points to the lodestar of all
lode-stones—the polar star. Then, the way in which faithful wife
and cherished husband cohere to each

other i& a familiar idea. Next,
tlierc is the idea of the creeper turning
itself around a branch or another
creeper; that also is well-known. You know
how such have become
sacred objects, like the mistletoe. Again,
the flow of the river towards